

The Asian and Balkan Background of *Dracula's* Wallachian Restoration (1473-1474)

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Abstract: Roughly a week before Ali Mihaloğlu, bey of Vidin and Smederevo, raided Oradea (February 7-8, 1474), the royal link between Hungary proper and the Voivodate of Transylvania, the Commune of Ragusa, equally vassal to Ottoman sultan Mehmed II and to Matthias Corvinus, king of Hungary, informed the Venetian doge, Nicolò Marcello, her Adriatic neighbour, about the most recent developments at the Porte, as well as both at the Porte's Asian and European borders (January 31, 1474). From the latest news on Usun Hassan, still viewed by some as Christendom's main anti-Ottoman hope (in spite of the crippling losses he had suffered in August 1473), Ragusa moved on – in her message to Venice (earlier Usun's main supporter) – to the combats in *Vlachia Maior* (Wallachia proper), recently invaded by Stephen III *the Great* of Moldavia (November 8-30, 1473). The information had likewise been provided by the Ragusan envoys to the Porte, who had just returned to the Adriatic, after departing from Constantinople (Istanbul) on December 28, 1473. With Venice waging an increasingly desperate war against Mehmed II (for ten years and counting), the task of conveying Ottoman inside information was very delicate for tribute paying Ragusa. The Ragusan message is the only extant known source to state that Stephen III *the Great* had won Wallachia from Radu III *the Handsome* for the benefit of Vlad III *the Impaler*. The rest of the known sources (however chronicles, not documents) claim that Stephen enthroned Basarab III *Laiotă* as ruler of Wallachia (*Laiotă* was his Wallachian ruler of choice until autumn 1474). Ragusa's Venetian message bluntly contradicts the known contemporary data on Stephen III's intervention in Wallachia in November 1473 and on the subsequent events, data preserved only in the chronicles of Stephen III (chiefly in the *Moldavian-German Chronicle* intended for Habsburg subjects, around 1499-1500) and in the writings of Jan Długosz (notoriously hostile towards the Hunyadis).

Keywords: Vlad III of Wallachia (*Dracula*), Usun Hassan, Mehmed II, Matthias Corvinus, Stephen III of Moldavia, Ragusa, Venice, *Vlachia Maior*.

Roughly a week before Ali Mihaloğlu, bey of Vidin and Smederevo,¹ raided Oradea (February 7-8, 1474),² the royal link between Hungary proper and the Voivodate of Transylvania,³ the

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¹ E.g. Aleksije A. Olesnicki, *Mihajlo Szilagyi i srbska despotija: akcija Szilagyjeva za oslobodenje Smedereva od Turaka i njegov poraz od Ali-bega Mihaloglije kod Bazjaša 8. studenoga 1460* (=Rad Hrvatske Akademije Znanosti i Umjetnosti. Razreda Povijesno-Jezikoslovnog i Filozofsko-Pravnoga, CXXV) (Zagreb, 1943); Olga Zirojević. "Smederevski sandžakbeg Ali beg Mihaloglu", *Zbornik za Istoriju Matice Srpske*, II (1971), 9-27; Orlin Sabev, "The Legend of Köse Mihal: Additional Notes", *Turcica*, XXXIV (2002), 241-252; Ayşe Ezgi Dikici, *Painting an Icon of the Ideal Gâzi: An Exploration of the Cultural Meanings of the Love Affair Episode in Sûzî Chelebi's Gazavâtname of Mihaloğlu Ali Bey* [MA Thesis (Central European University)] (Budapest, 2007); Marija Kiprovska, "The Mihaloğlu Family: *Gâzi* Warriors and Patrons of Dervish Hospices", *Journal of Ottoman Studies*, XXXII (2008), 193-222.

² Aurel Decei, "Incursiunea (*Akîn*) a lui Mihaloglu Ali Beg asupra Orăzii în anul 1474, pe temeiul istoriei lui Ibn Kemal", in *Sub semnul lui Clio. Omagiu Acad. Prof. Ştefan Pascu*, edited by Nicolae Edroiu (Cluj, 1974), 296-301.

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Commune of Ragusa, equally vassal to Ottoman sultan Mehmed II and to Matthias Corvinus, king of Hungary,⁴ informed the Venetian doge, Nicolò Marcello,⁵ her Adriatic neighbour,⁶ about the most recent developments at the Porte, as well as both at the Porte's Asian and European borders (January 31, 1474).⁷ From the latest news on Usun Hassan, still viewed by some as Christendom's main anti-Ottoman hope (in spite of the crippling losses he had suffered in August 1473),⁸ Ragusa moved on – in her message to Venice (earlier Usun's main supporter) – to the combats in *Vlachia Maior* (Wallachia proper), recently occupied by Stephen III of Moldavia (November 8-30, 1473).⁹ The information had likewise been provided by the Ragusan envoys to the Porte, who had just returned to the Adriatic, after departing from Constantinople (Istanbul) on December 28, 1473.¹⁰ With Venice waging an increasingly desperate war against Mehmed (for ten years and counting),¹¹ the task of conveying Ottoman inside information was very delicate for tribute paying Ragusa.¹²

Original Latin text: [...] *Si autem ipse Ussuncassanus dicta oppida resignare recusaverit, nulla inter eos pax secutura est, fertur insuper quod hoc anno, si ipsa pax sequitur, ipso*

³ Vince Bunyitay, *A váradi püspökség története*, I. A váradi püspökök a püspökség alapításától 1566. évig (Nagyvárad, 1883), 301-307. It should be noted that February 6, 1474, was also recorded as the date of the initial Ottoman attack.

⁴ Marianna D. Birnbaum, "Renaissance Contacts between Dubrovnik (Ragusa) and the Kingdom of Hungary", *Hungarian Studies Review*, XIII (1986), 1, pp. 35-44; Vesna Miović, *Dubrovačka diplomacija u Istanbulu* (Zagreb, 2003), pp. 51-66; Jesse C. Howell, *The Ragusa Road: Mobility and Encounter in the Ottoman Balkans (1430-1700)* [PhD Thesis (Harvard University)] (Cambridge, MA, 2017), pp. 44-48. Ragusa was also the cible of lasting Neapolitan ambitions, spearheaded at that time by Ferdinand of Aragon, the father-in-law to be of Matthias (after autumn 1474).

⁵ For instance: Giuseppe Gullino, "Nicolò Marcello", *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, LXIX (2007), sub voce.

⁶ Zdenka Janeković-Römer, *Ragusan Views of Venetian Rule (1205-1358)* in *Balcani occidentali, Adriatico e Venezia fra XIII e XVIII secolo/ Der westliche Balkan, der Adriaum und Venedig (13.-18. Jahrhundert)*, edited by Gherardo Ortalli, Oliver Jens Schmitt (Vienna, 2009), 53-76; Lovro Kunević, "The Ragusan Image of Venice and the Venetian Image of Ragusa in the Early Modern Period", in *Practices of Coexistence: Constructions of the Other in Early Modern Perceptions*, edited by Marianna D. Birnbaum, Marcell D. Sebök (Budapest-New York, 2017), 143-176.

⁷ Ragusa's letter to Doge Marcello was published, with errors, by József Gelich and Lajos Thallóczy *Diplomatarium relationum reipublicae ragusanae cum regno Hungariae* (Budapest, 1887), no. 385, 631. For a new edition of this most valuable source: I.-A. Pop, *Atletul Ștefan și românii ca protagoniști la Marea Neagră în epistole semnate de Papa Sixt al IV-lea și de umanistul Francesco Filelfo (1475-1476)*, in *Spre pământul făgăduinței, între Balcani și Bugeac. Omagiu Doamnei Profesoare Elena Știupur la împlinirea vârstei de 80 de ani*, edited by Daniel Cain, Aneta Mihaylova, Roumiana L. Stantcheva, Andrei Timotin (Brăila, 2020), pp. 17-34, in the Appendix, no. 2, 30-31.

⁸ E.g. Franz Babinger, *Mehmed der Eroberer und seine Zeit: Weltentstürmer einer Zeitenwende* (Munich, 1953), 332-338; John E. Woods, *The Aqquyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire* (Salt Lake City, UT, 1999²), 114-116.

⁹ For the, official at least, chronology of Stephen's first major (anti-Ottoman) campaign in Wallachia: Ștefan S. Gorovei, Maria-Magdalena Székely, *Princeps omni laude maior: o istorie a lui Ștefan cel Mare* (Putna, 2005), 100-101.

¹⁰ The letter sent to the doge contained no reference to the itinerary of the returning envoys, but a month (December 28, 1473-January 31, 1474, minus a day or two) seems rather excessive for a journey between Constantinople and Ragusa (see in comparison Bariša Krekić, "Il servizio di corrieri di Ragusa a Costantinopoli e Salonicchi nella metà del secolo XIV", *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta*, XXI (1952), 1, 113-119). Unless other (natural or Ottoman) events delayed the envoys, we can presume that either they spent time collecting additional information on their return journey or (also) that the Commune of Ragusa informed the Venetian doge only after supplementary verification of the data.

¹¹ On the first Ragusan pairing (so-to-say) of Usun Hassan, Matthias Corvinus and Stephen III during the Venetian-Ottoman war of 1463-1479, see Al. Simon, "Istorie e novelle de Levante din primăvara anului 1468: Uzun Hassan, Morea și cei 30 000 de morți de la Baia", *Revista Istorică*, NS, XXIX (2018), 3-4 [2020], 343-352.

¹² Hence also the "post-script", appended immediately after the news on Radu, Stephen and Vlad: [...] *Hec sunt que oratores nostrj explorare potuerunt, quę quantum veritati nitantur ignoramus, nos bona fide et sincere pro debito cui astringimur, que nobis nunciantur Celsitudine Vestre significamus, cui cum non desint omnium que ubique agantur scriptores, et nuncij, et hec et alia exploratissime esse non dubitamus [...]*. In English: [...] These are those <news> that our envoys were able to gather, <and> we do not know how much they [i.e. the news] are grounded in truth, <but> because of our good faith and sincerity <and> due to our binding duty, we convey the information we have received to Your Excellency, who does not lack all that [i.e. all the means] necessary to verify all that <data> revealed by scribes and envoys, and we do not doubt that these and others [i.e. reports] will be thoroughly verified <by Your Excellency> [...].

*personaliter sit ocio operam daturus, quodque novum Romanie Bassam, qui est quidam Bosnensis natione Sulimanbeigh eunuchus, ad partes Albanie expediturus, ad daunam quoque Moldovie exercitum parabat, propter conceptam indignationem, quod favore Stephani, Moldovie voyvode, Radulus, Vlachie Maioris dominus, qui dicto imperatori serviebat, eiectus sit, et Vladislaus Draculis quidam ipsam Vlachiam dicto Stephano opitulante rursus occupaverit [...]. 31 Ianuarii 1474.*¹³

Modern English translation: [...]“But if the said Usun Hassan would refuse to return <to Mehmed II> the said cities [in the territories of Trebizond (*oppida territorij Trapezonti*)¹⁴], then no peace was to be concluded between them; additionally, it was reported [by the recently returned Ragusan envoys to the sultan] that if the said peace was to follow, then he [Mehmed] would use this respite [*ocio* (i.e. in fact idleness)] to personally attend to his plan, that is: to muster the host of eunuch Süleyman Beg, of the Bosnian nation, the new Pasha of Rumelia,¹⁵ <recently> sent to the parts of Albania, also against Moldavia, given the <sultan's personally> bred [*conceptam*] indignation, because <of the fact that> Radu, the Lord of Great Vlachia,¹⁶ who served the said Emperor, was ousted, through the grace of Stephen, Voivode of Moldavia,¹⁷ and <because> Wladislaw Dracula¹⁸ was in return [*rursus*]¹⁹ to occupy that Vlachia, through the favour/ grace of the said Stephen [...]”²⁰

¹³ Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku, Dubrovnik (DAD), Lettere e Commissioni, *Lettere di Levante*, reg. 5. [1403-1576], f. 113^v.

¹⁴ The issue of the late Empire of Trebizond, whose capital had been conquered by Mehmed II in 1461, was chiefly a family affair because of Usun Hassan influential imperial wife, Theodora Kantakouzenos/ *Despina Khatun* (Thierry Ganchou, “Une Kantakouzenè, impératrice de Trébizonde: Théodora ou Hélène?”, *Revue des Études Byzantines*, LVIII (2000), 215-220; Rustam Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks, 1204-1461* (Leiden-Boston, 2016), 259, 277).

¹⁵ For Süleyman (a – noble? – “rarity”: a Bosnian and an eunuch), who was to lead the Ottoman (-Wallachian) troops into their Moldavian (-Hungarian) catastrophe of Vaslui (January 10, 1475), see also M. Kiprovska, *The Military Organization of the Akincis in Ottoman Rumelia* [MA Thesis (Bilkent University)] (Istanbul, 2004), pp. 35-41; Ovidiu Cristea, “Pentru o ediție critică a scrisorii lui Ștefan cel Mare către principii creștini. Observații pe marginea listei căpeteniilor otomane participante la bătălia de la Vaslui”, *Analele Putnei*, XV (2019), 1, 167-188, at 174, 176.

¹⁶ Radu III *the Handsome*, voivode of Wallachia (1462-1473, 1473-1474), the son of Vlad II *Dracul* and the personal favourite of Mehmed II, was furthermore married to Mary (called *Despina*), most probably one of the numerous nieces of Mara Branković, Murad II's widow and the “guardian angel” of Mehmed in his troubled youth. Along with Radu's princely treasury, Mary *Despina* and her daughter Mary (*Voichița*) were Stephen III's spoils of war at the end of his Wallachian campaign of November 1473. Some five years later, Mary *Voichița* became Stephen's third and final wife.

¹⁷ Stephen III *the Great*, voivode of Moldavia (1457-1504), the illegitimate son of Bogdan II (the – at best – illegitimate son of Alexander I *the Just*), had been officially introduced to the world, as the roughly twelve year old associate-ruler of his father, through the treaty concluded in February 1450 between Bogdan II and John Hunyadi, the regent of Hungary (who, in December 1447, after executing Vlad III's father, Vlad II *Dracul*, had even temporarily claimed the throne of Wallachia from himself, as if he, John, had a princely blood rite to the transalpine crown). Bogdan II was the only known Wallachian voivode from whom John requested and received the promise of shelter in case of need (*Documenta Romaniae Historica* (DRH), D. *Relațiile între Țările Române, I. 1222-1456*, edited by Ștefan Pascu, Constantin Cihodaru, Konrad G. Gündisch, Damaschin Mioc, Viorica Pervain (Bucharest, 1977), no. 113, 183). After his father's beheading (1451), Stephen probably found harbour in Hunyadi Transylvania. Following Vlad III's lead, he betrayed John on the eve of the battle of Belgrade (1456). Vlad then helped Stephen win Moldavia (1457).

¹⁸ Vlad III *the Impaller*, voivode of Wallachia (1448, 1456-1462, 1476), likewise the son of Vlad II *Dracul*, raised however (as hostage and as refugee) by both John Hunyadi and Murad II, had recently remarried into the Hunyadi family (see below). His first wife had been either (just) a close relative of Matthias (according to Venetian sources) or even Matthias' (illegitimate) half-sister on his father's side (according to German stories on Vlad's deeds). The wedding had been celebrated immediately after Vlad's (in)famous anti-Ottoman campaign of January-February 1462 (Ion Bianu, “Ștefan cel Mare. Cateva documente din arhivul de stat de la Milano”, *Columna lui Traian*, IV (1883), 1-2, 30-47, at no. 1, 34-35; Al. Simon, *Pământurile crucii: românii și Cruciada Târzie* (Cluj-Napoca, 2012), 107-112).

¹⁹ The wording *rursus occupaverit* bares only one analogy (to our knowledge): a matrimonial (nuptial) text ascribed to Titus Maccius Plautus (c. 254-184 BC), the highly influential father of Roman theatre, increasingly popular during the Renaissance (e.g. Richard F. Hardin, “Encountering Plautus in the Renaissance: A Humanist Debate on Comedy”,

Two Anti-Ottoman Fronts. The, at first glance, unnatural Ragusan pairing (of Venetian utility) of Asian Usun Hassan with European Stephen III of Moldavia,²¹ was nevertheless predictable.²² After successful years of warfare against Radu III of Wallachia (1469/1470-1471/1472),²³ Stephen had been coerced²⁴ by Mehmed II to send troops (next to those of Ottoman loyal Radu) for the sultan's final clash with Usun Hassan in Asia Minor in the summer of 1473.²⁵ At the same time, Stephen stood in close connection with the plotters around Djem,²⁶ Mehmed's son and regent for Europe (Rumelia), who awaited the sultan's allegedly imminent demise (it was Stephen who informed Djem's entourage that Mehmed had not lost, but had in fact triumphed over Usun²⁷). Then, at a time when Venice, alike several European powers, still struggled (astutely aided by Mehmed's spies and "Trojan" messengers)²⁸ to accept the reality of Usun Hassan's defeat,²⁹ Stephen III attacked Wallachia, the Ottoman outpost north of the Lower Danube, at the

Renaissance Quarterly, LX (2007), 3, 789-818). For the lines in question (in Friedrich Wilhelm Ehrenfried Rost, *Opuscula Plautina*, edited by Karl Heinrich Adelbert Lipsius, I. *Continens Commenationes Plautinas* (Leipzig, 1836), 63, part of *De nuptiis servilibus ad Plauti Casin. Prolog v. 67-77 (Nuptiale donum illustri Wenckio datum Die III. Septembr. MDCCCXIII: Quae res recte vertat!)*: [...] *Te vero ipsum non nisi post repotia huius cibi saporem gustu explorare volumus quem tum demum probabilem videri speramus, cum ventriculum tuum, omni dulcedine equitissimarum epularum fatigatum, quotidiani cibi desiderium rursus occupaverit. Quid igitur est ? Cito, inquis, absolve me, fieri dictis compendium volo* [...]). The bridal auspices of the initial wording, re-employed in early 1474, were most likely used, at that time, in close connection to the – therefore apparently – recently arranged marriage between Vlad and Matthias' first degree cousin on his mother's side, Justine Szilágyi (as an innuendo for their wedding).

²⁰ For the Romanian translation on the Ragusan report: Pop, "Atletul Ștefan și românii", Appendix, no. 2, 31.

²¹ The possibility that their wives were related has received much attention and is worth a separate and neutral analysis.

²² Recently Ștefan Andreescu, "Uzun Hasan și Moldova. Noi observații", *Analele Putnei*, XIX (2019), 1, 45-50. For the regional political framework, see also Małgorzata Dąbrowska, "Uzun Hassan's Project of Alliance with the Polish King", in Eadem, *Hidden Secrets: Late Byzantium in the Western and Polish Context* (Łódź, 2017), 211-232.

²³ E.g. Laurențiu Rădvan, "Din relațiile lui Ștefan cel Mare cu Țara Românească", in *Ștefan cel Mare la cinci secole de la moartea sa*, edited by Petronel Zahariuc, Silviu Văcaru, (Iași, 2003), 269-284, here at pp. 270-276; Nagy Pienaru, "Relațiile lui Ștefan cel Mare cu Hanatul din Crimeea. O controversă: prima incursiune tătară în Moldova", in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt: atlet al credinței creștine* [edited by Șt.S. Gorovei, M-M. Székely] (Putna, 2004), 275-306.

²⁴ E.g. [Domenico Malipiero,] *Annali veneti dall'anno 1457 al 1500 del Senatore Domenico Malipiero ordinati e abbreviati dal senatore Francesco Longo* (=Archivio Storico Italiano, VII), edited by Agostino Sagredo (Florence, 1843), p. 80 (Malipiero). In 1472, on the eve of Stephen's wedding with Mary of Mangop/Theodoro in the Crimea, in mid-September, the Ottoman troops were already in Wallachia. They were then withdrawn and sent to Asia Minor.

²⁵ For the sources: Al. Simon, "Western and Eastern Riders of the Storm", in *Itinerarii istoriografice. Studii în onoarea istoricului Costin Feneșan*, edited by Rudolf Gräf, Dumitru Țicu, Adrian Magina (Cluj-Napoca, 2011), pp. 79-96, as well as O. Cristea, N. Pienaru, "Țara Românească și bătălia de la Bașkent", *Analele Putnei*, VIII (2012), 1, 17-36.

²⁶ For instance: Theoharis Stavrides, *The Sultan of Vezirs: The Life and Times of Ottoman Grand Vezir Mahmud Pasha Angelović (1453-1474)* (Leiden-Boston-Cologne, 2001), 181-183. For Venetian information, e.g. Ivan Božić, "Kolebanja Mahmud Paše Anđelovića", *Prilozi za Književnost, Jezik, Istoriju i Folklor*, XLI (1975), 3-4, 159-171.

²⁷ Mihail Guboglu, "Izvoare turco-persane privind relațiile lui Ștefan cel Mare cu Imperiul Otoman", *Revista Arhivelor*, LIX (1982), 2, pp. 34-35; Cristea-Pienaru, "Țara Românească și bătălia de la Bașkent", pp. 20 (notes 17-18), 30-31.

²⁸ For instance: Nicolae Iorga, "Veneția în Marea Neagră" (III): "Originea legăturilor cu Ștefan cel Mare și mediul politic al dezvoltării lor", *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice*, 2nd series, XXXVII (1914-1915), 1-76, at nos. 1-2, 29-30 (September 9 and 12, 1473; seemingly Mehmed's "operatives" were active in Venice since well before the confrontations with Usun Hassan in August 1473). We must add that the Turks (frequently Latinized as *Teucrici*) were often deemed the heir of the Trojans, chiefly after the Fall of Byzantium, after their victory over their natural and mortal enemies: the Greeks (Benjamin Weber, *Lutter contre les Turcs: les formes nouvelles de la croisade pontificale au XV^e siècle* (=Collection de l'École Française de Rome, CDLXXII) (Rome, 2013), 46).

²⁹ E.g. Iván Nagy, Albert Nyáry, *Magyar diplomáciai emlékek. Mátyás király korából 1458-1490* (=Monumenta Hungariae Historica, IV, 1-4), II. [1466-1480] (Budapest, 1876), nos. 173-174, 248-250 (MDE); *Urkundliche Nachträge zur Österreichisch-Deutschen Geschichte im Zeitalter Kaiser Friedrich III.* (=Fontes Rerum Austriacarum, I, 46), edited by Adolf Bachmann (Vienna, 1892), no. 234, p. 257; no. 251, 266-267; *I libri commemoriali della Repubblica di Venezia*.

very – real – height of Mehmed II's power.³⁰ It was a very bold move on behalf of the notoriously double-dealing, to put it mildly, Stephen III (for instance, on the very even of his Wallachian campaign of late 1473, that is on November 6, the Viennese chancery of Emperor Frederick III of Habsburg, Matthias' nemesis,³¹ listed Stephen as Frederick's *captain in Wallachia*,³² precisely as part of the emperor's efforts to remove Matthias from the great crusader stage and to take over the anti-Ottoman connection to Usun Hassan³³).

At that same time, Venice was also losing hope (that hope, remotely connected to reality,³⁴ was already non extant in fact) in the Muscovite and Tartar anti-Ottoman arrangements and talks³⁵ she had entered (the former, founded on the marriage between Ivan III of Moscow and Zoe/ Sofia Palaeologus,³⁶ the fraternal niece of the last Byzantine emperor, had largely been an offspring of the designs of the late Cardinal Bessarion).³⁷ The Republic of Saint Mark (and to a certain, not neglectable degree, also the Republic of Saint Blaise³⁸, i.e. Ragusa³⁹) was compelled⁴⁰ to rely on Stephen of Moldavia (already on collision course in the Crimea with Ivan⁴¹), whose lands should have been in fact overrun by Russian and Tartar crusaders (as strange as this sounded, and sounds)⁴² on their road(s) into the Ottoman Empire, if the earlier plans would have come to fruition.⁴³

Regesti (=Monumenti Storici Publicati dalla Deputazione Veneta di Storia Patria, I, 1-6), [edited by Riccardo Predelli,] V. [Registri XIV-XVII] (Venice, 1901), no. XVI-65, 213. The question is worth revisiting.

³⁰ E.g. Al. Simon, "Habsburgs, Jagiellonians and Crusading: The Wallachian Case in the 1470s", in *The Jagiellonians in Europe: Dynastic Diplomacy and Foreign Relations*, edited by Attila Bárány (Debrecen, 2016), pp. 53-68, at p. 58.

³¹ I.-A. Pop, "Alcuni aspetti della diffamazione del re Mattia Corvino nel XV secolo", *Transylvanian Review*, XXIV (2015), suppl. 2 [2016], 26-34. For the context, with focus on Jagiellonian Poland (Frederick's natural anti-Hunyadi ally), e.g. Liviu Pilat, "Republica Christiana și Moldova (1471-1474)", *Analele Putnei*, III (2007), 2, 91-104.

³² *Regesten Kaiser Friedrich III. (1440-1493). Nach Archiven und Bibliotheken geordnet (=J[ohannes]. F[riedrich] Böhmer Regesta Imperii, XIII)*, general-editors Heinrich Koller, Paul-Joachim Heinig, Alois Niederstätter, suppl. II-1. *Das Taxregister der römischen Kanzlei 1471-1475 (Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv Wien, Hss. weiss 529 und weiss 920)*, edited by P.-J. Heinig, Ines Grund (Vienna-Cologne-Graz, 2002), no. 3539, 523 (with additional information).

³³ See Giovanni Rotta, "Taking Stock of Ludovico da Bologna", in *Research on the Turkic World (=Studia et Documenta Turcologica, V-VI)*, edited by Stoica Lascu (Cluj-Napoca, 2018), pp. 47-75, at pp. 59, 73-75.

³⁴ L. Pilat, O. Cristea, *The Ottoman Threat and Crusading on the Eastern Border of Christendom during the 15th Century* (Leiden-Boston, 2017 [2018]), 137, 150, 290.

³⁵ For an overview, see in particular N. Pienaru, "Proiectul scitic. Relațiile lui Ștefan cel Mare cu Hoarda cea Mare, *Revista Istorică*, NS, XIV (2003), 5-6, 121-135; Idem, "Moldova și Persia. Extrase din cronică lui Hasan Rumlu privitoare la confruntările moldo-otomane din vremea lui Ștefan cel Mare", *Analele Putnei*, IX (2013), 2, 25-34.

³⁶ Alike in the case of the wives of Stephen (Mary of Mangop/ Theodoro) and Usun Hassan (Theodora Cantacuzenos/ Despina Khatun), the wives of Stephen and Ivan also seem and were deemed related (an issue worth reviewing).

³⁷ E.g. Paul Pierling, *La Russie et le Saint Siège. Études diplomatiques*, I-2 (Paris, 1896), 153-165; Oskar Halecki, "Sixte IV et la chrétienté orientale", in *Mélanges Eugène Tisserant*. II-1. *Orient Chrétien* (Vatican City, 1964), 241-264, especially 248-256. The documentary evidences are largely the same since the close of the 19th century.

³⁸ Or of Saint James. We recall that Saint Blaise was and is commonly named Sveti Vlaho/Blaz in Dubrovnik.

³⁹ Because late medieval Ragusan-Wallachian relations represent a rather neglected topic in Romanian historiography, we redraw attention (in spite of some of the questionable aspects in the paper) to the article of Radu Constantinescu, "Documente ragusane în colecția de microfilme a Arhivelor Statului", in *Revista Arhivelor*, LVIII (1981), 1, 34-40.

⁴⁰ For the "genesis" of the Venetian-Moldavian entente, see I.-A. Pop, Al. Simon, "Ungaria et Valachia: promisiunile valahe ale Republicii Sfântului Marcu din anii 1470", in *Revista Istorică*, NS, XXV (2015), 3-4 [2016], 5-66.

⁴¹ For instance: Gustave Alef, *The Origins of Muscovite Autocracy: The Age of Ivan III* (Berlin, 1986), p. 82; M.-M. Székely, Șt.S. Gorovei, *Maria Asanina Paleologhina, o prințesă bizantină pe tronul Moldovei* (Putna, 2006), 49-57.

⁴² E.g. Norman Housley, *Crusading and the Ottoman Threat. 1453-1505* (Oxford, 2012), 32. Nevertheless, the Western (Italian foremost) thought of involving Muscovite Russia (in particular) and the divided Tartars was never truly abandoned. It was constantly revived mainly throughout the reign of Frederick III's son and heir, Maximilian I.

⁴³ In these matters, see foremost the sources in Enrico Cornet, *Le guerre dei Veneti nell'Asia, 1470-1474. Documenti cavati dall'Archivio ai Frari in Venezia* (Vienna, 1856), no. 14, p. 25; no. 43, p. 44; no. 82, 102; no. 85, 106-107; no. 91, 113-114 (in particular, the latter two Venetian documents from November 20, and December 4, 1473).

Revival and Rise. In the immediate aftermath of Ragusa's official report sent to Venice on January 31, 1474 (unlike the Republic of Saint Mark's own subjects, the Republic of Ragusa had informed the *Serenissima*, already on October 29, 1473, that Usun Hassan had lost and Sultan Mehmed II had won),⁴⁴ the Eastern reports on the clashes between the Wallachians (led by Stephen III of Moldavia) and the *Turks* began to multiply, in the Italian Peninsula as well,⁴⁵ in the second half of February 1474.⁴⁶ Venice then even spread news about Moldavian victories over the Ottomans,⁴⁷ victories for which Stephen himself never took credit (this Venetian “fake-news”, probably supported by Matthias, who wanted to balance the negative impact of the Ottoman attack on Oradea,⁴⁸ weighted heavily on the Italian reception of Stephen's real great victory against Süleyman's host in January 1475).⁴⁹

Simultaneously, Venice multiplied her overtures towards Matthias in order to achieve that very detour (retreat) of the Ottoman host from Albania (where it besieged Venetian Scutari),⁵⁰ outlined in the Ragusan message from the end of January 1474 (this was eventually accomplished by late autumn 1474 at the human and material expenses of Stephen III, following a series of renewed Moldavian, as well as – later – Hungarian, campaigns in Wallachia).⁵¹ In February 1471, Gregory of Heimburg, the chancellor of the *Heretic King* of Bohemia, George Podiebrad († March 1471),⁵² had branded – not without grounds⁵³ – both Matthias Corvinus and his father, John

⁴⁴ The neglected document was published in MDE, II, no. 174, 249-250. Additionally, Mehmed has sent envoys to his Serbian and Bosnian borders to announce his victory so that nobody would rebel against him ([...] *Turchi ad confinia omnia in Rassiam et Bosniam nuntios misere, ea ratione, ut nulla rebellio fiat; sed populi et fama et opinione victorie* [...]). Nobody except Stephen of Moldavia. Ragusa's interest in his deeds was therefore fully understandable.

⁴⁵ Little or nothing was known about these events until the early 2000s (Andrei Pippidi, “Noi izvoare italiene despre Vlad Ţepeş şi Ştefan cel Mare”, *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie*, XX (2002), 15-21, at pp. 17-19).

⁴⁶ Archivio di Stato di Milano, Milan (ASM), Archivio Ducale Sforzesco (A.D.S.), Potenze Estere, *Turchia-Levante*, cart. 647, fasc. [3], *Rodi*, nn (January 16, 1474); *Ungheria*, cart. 649. 1458-1490, fasc. [2], 1466-1480, nn (February 15, 1474). The second report too should have been placed in the *Levante-Turchia* (or in the *Venezia*) series, but the issue was deemed Hungarian. Both reports were published in Al. Simon, “Anti-Ottoman Warfare and Crusader Propaganda in 1474: New Evidences from the Archives of Milan”, *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, XLVI (2007), 1-4, 25-39, at 30.

⁴⁷ ASM, A.D.S., Potenze Estere, *Venezia*, cart. 361. 1475, fasc. 3. *Marzo*, nn (March 25, 28, 1474; in Simon, “Anti-Ottoman Warfare”, p. 32). Though Milan did not use to the Venetian calendar (March 1-February 28/29), the reports were later archived along with the reports on the victory of Vaslui (January 10, 1475) because they seemed their natural pair, in spite of their clear dating: 1474.

⁴⁸ According to the *Chronicon Dubnicense* (hostile towards Matthias), the burning of Oradea endangered Matthias's rule because of the domestic unrest caused by Ali's attack (*Chronicon Dubnicense*, in *Historiae Hungariae Fontes Domestici*, III, edited by M[átyás] Flórián (Leipzig [-Pécs], 1884), 1-204, at. 198-199). Antonio Bonfini certainly did not waste his Latin words on the topic, therefore suggesting that the attack did indeed lead to major problems for Matthias.

⁴⁹ I.-A. Pop, “The Romanians from Moldavia at the Jubilee in Rome (1475)”, *Il Mar Nero*, X (2019-2020), 163-170.

⁵⁰ For the main concern of Venice at that time, see also the sources in O.-J. Schmitt, “Die venezianischen Jahrbücher des Stefano Magno (ÖNB Codd. 6215-6217) als Quelle zur albanischen und epirotischen Geschichte im späten Mittelalter (1433-1477)”, in *Südosteuropa von vormoderner Vielfalt und nationalstaatlicher Vereinheitlichung. Festschrift für Edgar Hösch*, edited by Konrad Clewing, O.J. Schmitt (Munich, 2005), 133-183, chiefly at 159-163, 174-179.

⁵¹ See also Al. Simon, “În jurul bătăliei de la Vaslui (1474-1475). Considerații asupra relațiilor dintre Moldova, Țara Românească și Regatul Ungariei”, *Studia Universitatis Babeş Bolyai. Historia*, XLIX (2004), 2, pp. 3-26, at pp. 9-10. Out of the promised 40,000 ducats for the retreat of the besieging Ottomans from Scutari, Matthias certainly (and only) received half of the sum (*I libri commemoriali*, V, no. XVI-73, p. 215; October 31, 1474) after the strange Moldavian-Hungarian campaign in Wallachia (October 1-5, 1474), when the anti-Ottoman allies had ended-up fighting each other. The matter was resolved after Stephen, though victorious, decided to abandon his candidate for the Wallachian throne, Basarab III *Laiotă*, who was replaced by the Hungarian favourite, Basarab IV *Țepeș*. In exchange, the Hungarian troops (consisting mainly of Transylvanian Szeklers) fought alongside Stephen at the battle of Vaslui in January 1475.

⁵² Frederick Heymann, *George of Bohemia, King of Heretics* (Princeton, NJ, 1965). Until the death of his daughter, Catherine (1464), Podiebrad had also been the father-in-law of Matthias, a precondition for Matthias' liberation in 1458.

Hunyadi, as traitors of the Cross: [...] *der Ungarische kunig ist gut Turck als sein vater was, do er den Turck liesse Constantinople zwingen* [...] (“the Hungarian king is a good Turk alike his father, for he allowed the Turk to take Constantinople”).⁵⁴ A lot had changed by early spring 1474, and this included the failure of the *Illyrian* grand design (centred around Bosnian queen, Catherine, in exile in Rome, and bishop Nicholas of Modruš, who had just authored, in early 1473, an infamous portrait of Vlad), a royal plan that had to drive *unworthy* Matthias out of the (West-) Balkans.⁵⁵

The failure of this plan, failure initiated by the Wallachian anti-Ottoman combats of November 1473⁵⁶ and completed by the matrimonial arrangement concluded between Ferdinand of Aragon, king of Naples (who favoured the *Illyrian* grand-design),⁵⁷ and Matthias, redraws attention to the Ragusan message from January 31, 1474, and to the identity of the ruler of *Vlachia Maior*, desired by Stephen (and by Matthias), according to the Ragusan envoys sent earlier to Constantinople. The Ragusan message is the only extant known source to state that Stephen III *the Great* had won Wallachia from Radu III *the Handsome* for the benefit of Vlad III *the Impaller*.⁵⁸ The rest of the known sources (however chronicles, not documents)⁵⁹ claim that Stephen enthroned Basarab III *Laiotă* as ruler of Wallachia (*Laiotă* was his Wallachian ruler of choice until autumn 1474).⁶⁰

Divergent Narratives. Ragusa's Venetian message bluntly contradicts the known contemporary data on Stephen III's intervention in Wallachia in November 1473 and on the subsequent events, data preserved only in the chronicles of Stephen III (chiefly in the *Moldavian-German Chronicle* intended for Habsburg subjects, around 1499-1500)⁶¹ and in the writings of Jan Długosz

⁵³ On these delicate matters: Francisc Pall, “Byzance à la veille de sa chute et Janco de Hunedoara”, *Byzantinoslavica*, XXX (1969), 1, 119-126; Al. Simon, “Between the Adriatic and the Black Sea: Matthias Corvinus and the Ottoman Empire after the Fall of Negroponte”, *Radovi Zavoda za Hrvatsku Povijest*, XLII (2010), 2, 195-230, at 215-220.

⁵⁴ The neglected source is in Felix Priebatsch, *Politische Correspondenz des Kurfürsten Albrecht Achilles, 1470-1486* (= *Publikationen aus den Königlich Preussischen Staatsarchiven*, LIX), I. 1470-1474 (Leipzig, 1894), no. 137, 216.

⁵⁵ Luka Spoljarić, “Nicholas of Modruš and his *De Bellis Gothorum*: Politics and National History in the Fifteenth-Century Adriatic,” *Renaissance Quarterly*, XCII (2019), 457-491. Many divergent interpretations of these events have originated precisely in the fact that, at the beginning of 1473 and even in the summer of that year, both Matthias Corvinus and Stephen III of Moldavia were deemed untrustworthy at best by the main voices of anti-Ottoman warfare.

⁵⁶ See I.-A. Pop, Al. Simon, “Românii și regele Ștefan la Jubileul de la Roma (martie 1475)”, *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secției de Științe Istorice și Arheologie*, 5th Series, XXXV (2015-2020), 9-28.

⁵⁷ For Bosnia, Herzegovina, Naples: Veljan Atanasovski, *Pad Hercegovine* (Belgrade, 1979), 101-101; Spoljarić, “Nicholas of Modruš”, 476 (note 72), 477, 481 (notes 76, 88-89). For “in-between” Croatia: Borislav Grgin, *Počeci rasapa. Kralj Matijaš Korvin i srednjovjekovna Hrvatska* (Zagreb, 2002), 92, 171-175. For Vlad (in comparison also to the “last king of Bosnia”): Castilia Manea-Grgin, “Biskup Nikola Modruški o vlaškom knezu Vladu III. Drakuli-Țepeșu te o podrijetlu i jeziku Rumunja”, *Povijesni Prilozi*, XXIV (2005), pp. 107-131; Eadem, “Two Ill-Fated Rulers on the Christian-Ottoman Borderline: Wallachian Prince Vlad III Țepeș Dracula and Bosnian King Stephen Tomašević”, in *Vlad der Pfähler-Dracula: Tyrann oder Volkstribun?*, edited by Thomas M. Bonn, Rayk Einax, Stefan Rohdewald (Wiesbaden: 2017), 49-68 (one of the very few consistent “divergent” views of Vlad III and of his “official story”).

⁵⁸ Ragusa was the vassal of both Istanbul and Buda. The infamous story – Hunyadi as well (if not, above all) – of Vlad was no secret. These two facts, alone, rendered credibility to the news conveyed by the Commune of Ragusa to the Venetian doge. It was and is certainly a documentary (moreover) match for the information in the chronicles below.

⁵⁹ Possibly because they formed the military and political build-up for the disastrous Ottoman campaign in Moldavia (in the winter of 1474-1475), a failure rarely acknowledged in written, even decades later, by the non-Christian subjects of the Porte, the Ottoman chronicles (not to mention the few Ottoman documentary records that have in fact survived from the 1470s) apparently never recalled the conflicts of 1473-1474, although these chronicles frequently recalled the raid on Oradea, in early February 1474 (*Cronici turcești despre Țările Române. Extrase*, I. *Secolul al XV-lea-mijlocul secolului al XVII-lea*, edited by M. Guboglu, Mustafa Ali Mehmet (Bucharest, 1966), 61, 95, 127, 206, 244, 294, 321). It is unlikely, though not completely improbable (because of the very nature of Turkish archives and libraries, leaving aside the growingly complex scholarly framework), that this (Ottoman) image will be altered in the foreseeable future.

⁶⁰ For the known (edited) sources on the rulers of Wallachia in the 1470s: Constantin Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică a domnilor din Țara Românească și Moldova (a. 1324-1881)*, I. *Secolele XIV-XVI* (Bucharest, 2001), 119-121.

⁶¹ On this chronicle and its depiction of the events in the 1470s, see Pop-Simon, “*Ungaria et Valachia*”, 25, 40, 43.

(notoriously hostile towards the Hunyadis).⁶² Moreover, Stephen III's chronicles never once mentioned Vlad III *the Impaler*.⁶³ According to them, Stephen entered Wallachia on November 8, 1473. After several combats, he managed to take Bucharest on November 21/24.⁶⁴ Before returning to Moldavia, after three days of feasting, but also after defeating the Ottomans that had come to Radu's aid (November 28), Stephen III enthroned Basarab III *Laiotă* as lord of Wallachia, who then *ruled for a month*.⁶⁵ By Christmas time 1473, Radu III had reclaimed Wallachia, following his – Ottoman – victory over *Laiotă* (December 20, 1473).⁶⁶ On New Year's Eve (December 31, 1473), the Ottoman riders were already camped in central Moldova at Bârlad (near Vaslui), from where they ravaged the region.⁶⁷ In less than three weeks time (on January 19, 1474), Stephen's envoys at King Casimir IV Jagiello's court admitted that Radu had retaken Wallachia and that the *Turks* had plundered parts of Moldavia. The first Moldavian envoys to reach Krakow had claimed, on January 8, total victory over Radu, *the voivode of Bassarabia*, according to Długosz (who used Wallachia for Moldavia).⁶⁸

Although the successful – and vengeful – Ottoman response (of late December 1473–early January 1474) to Stephen's Wallachian campaign could have hardly reached the Bosphorus prior to the return of Ragusa's envoys to the Porte (December 28, 1473), the proven Ottoman eagerness to distribute the sultan's successes (most recently: the victory over Usun) probably brought news of Radu's restoration to Ragusa as well, by the time of the commune's letter to the Venetian doge (January 31, 1474).⁶⁹ The letter made no reference to the – recent – victorious Ottoman reaction, as

⁶² *Annales seu cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae* (=Jan Długosii Senioris Canonici Cracoviensis Opera omnia, XI–XIV), edited by Alexander Przezdziecki, IV (Krakow, 1887), pp. 600–601 (*Długosz*). Utterly hostile to the Hunyadis (he too blamed John for the crusader disaster at Varna, for which Wladislaw III Jagiello of Poland and Hungary had paid with his life), the influential Polish clergyman and diplomat was more than benevolent towards Matthias in regard to Vlad. Długosz recorded Vlad's arrest (1462) as prelude to the expulsion, in winter 1464–1465, of the Hungarian garrison from Chilia, at the Danube Mounds, by the populace eager to have peace with Mehmed, under Radu. Matthias' decision to arrest the traitorous *Moldaviae superioris* [!] *Principe, Wlado nomine*, had been more than justified (*Długosz*, IV, 408). Długosz's stand on Vlad is worth a closer inspection. Długosz, who in 1472 ordered and received a copy of Enea Silvio Piccolomini's *De Europa*, completed in spring 1458 (Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg, *Frühneuzeitliche Nationen im östlichen Europa. Das polnische Geschichtsdenken und die Reichweite einer humanistischen Nationalgeschichte (1500–1700)* (Wiesbaden, 2006), 47, note 31), was the advocate of the highly questionable – already in the 1470s and 1480s – theory of the *Italian* origins of the Lithuanians (an eastern idea that apparently was left unrecorded in Italy).

⁶³ To our knowledge, this aspect was never duly noticed in Romanian historiography, usually focused on avoiding any direct or indirect contemporary evidence that – might have – menaced the “brotherly” love between Stephen and Vlad.

⁶⁴ *Cronicle slavo-române din secolele XV–XVI publicate de Ioan Bogdan*, edited by P.P. Panaitescu (Bucharest, 1959), pp. 17, 30–31, 50, 63 (in their editorial sequence: the so-called *Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia*, deemed Stephen III's “official chronicle”, the *Moldavian-German Chronicle* and the *Chronicles of Putna, I–II*). In the latter two, written at Putna, Stephen's necropolis, Matthias' death was even listed along with the deaths of the members of Stephen's family.

⁶⁵ Based on the cited chronicles (and then on Długosz), see Gorovei-Székely, *Princeps omni laude maior*, 100–103.

⁶⁶ Stephen's *Moldavian-German Chronicle* provided in fact the most detailed information on these combats and raids (*Cronicle slavo-române*, 30–31), events that therefore seem to have been highly relevant at the end of the century. The Latin title of the only preserved copy (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, in Hartmann Schedel's well-known *Nachlaß*) was *Chronica breviter scripta Stephani dei gratia voivoda terrarum Moldannensium necon Valachyensis*.

⁶⁷ This was precisely the area, where Stephen III then won his famed anti-Ottoman victory in January 1475. It is not entirely impossible that the mention of the Ottoman camp in Moldavia (in late December 1473–early January 1474), recorded likewise in the said *Moldavian-German Chronicle*, bore a chiefly symbolical and less a historical relevance.

⁶⁸ *Długosz*, IV, 600–601. In relation to Długosz's quoted line on Vlad's fall (1462), we must emphasize that, in this case, Vlad's brother, Radu III, overthrown by Stephen, was named *the voivode of Bessarabia* (i.e. the Land of <the> Basarab<s>), not of *Moldavia superior*. Długosz further omitted that Radu was Vlad's brother, a fact he had recorded earlier, in regard to the Danubian events of 1462–1464/1465 (*Długosz*, IV, 408). Quite unsurprisingly in effect, Vlad was left out of the folios on Stephen's Wallachian autumn campaigns of 1476 and 1477 (*Długosz*, IV, 647–651).

⁶⁹ In addition to Krekić's cited study, see under the circumstances Gábor Ágoston, “Információszerzés és kémkedés az Oszmán Birodalomban a 15–17. században”, in *Információáramlás a magyar és török végvári rendszerben*, edited by

if the validity of such response was still “open to combat”, because the ultimate goal, at least on the Christian side (i.e. *Draculia's* Moldavian led re-enthronement in *Vlachia Maior*), was yet to be accomplished.⁷⁰ Most importantly however (and Ragusa seemingly relied heavily on this fact), nobody in Constantinople would have confused Basarab III *Laiotă* with Vlad III *the Impaller*.⁷¹ Either the chronicles on the Wallachian-Moldavian events of November 1473-January 1474 were fundamental distortions of the actual events, or the “Istanbul assets” of the Ragusan envoys were absolutely confident that Stephen was in fact paving the way for Vlad, King Matthias’ “dark jewel”.⁷² Ali Mihaloğlu’s raid of Oradea in early February 1474 supports the latter possibility,⁷³ made in fact abundantly clear by the reconciliation between Matthias and Stephen (1471),⁷⁴ that enabled Matthias’ to withstand the new Hungarian rebellion and the Polish attack on Hungary.⁷⁵

A year later, Stephen married Mary of Mangop/ Theodoro, in the Crimea (September 1472).⁷⁶ By the start of 1474, Vlad, the father of at least three (two boys had certainly been born

Tivadar Petercsák, Mátyás Berecz (Eger, 1999), 129-156, especially 132-134, 142-143, 146-147; Idem, “Birodalom és információ: Konstantinápoly, mint a koraújkori Európa információs központja”, in *Az értelem bátorsága. Tanulmányok Perjés Géza Emlékére*, edited by Gábor Hausner (Budapest, 2005), pp. 31-60, chiefly 33, 41. Information on late medieval travel speed in Western Europe does not necessarily apply for Eastern and South-Eastern Europe (e.g. Roland Schäfer, “Zur Geschwindigkeit des staatlichen Nachrichtenverkehrs im Spätmittelalter”, *Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereins für Steiermark*, LXXVI (1985), 101-119; Norbert Ohler, *Reisen im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt, 2004³), 111). In return, we remind that “high-speed” was reached occasionally on East-West roads (e.g. a message sent from Buda arrived in Venice within thirteen days, on March 13, 1461; MDE, I [1458-1465] (Budapest, 1875), no. 54, p. 82), in the cases of paramount events (within a month, Venice knew of the fall of Byzantium, on May 29, 1453) or when the matter was of the utmost urgency (e.g. in our case, Stephen’s envoys sent to inform Djem and his court that, to the astonishment of the prince’s retinue, Mehmed had won and not lost against Usun Hassan at the battle of Başkent, on August 11, 1473; cf. already Cristea-Pienaru, “Țara Românească și bătălia de la Başkent”, 33).

⁷⁰ Even though it is difficult to fathom how Basarab III *Laiotă* (if indeed Stephen’s chronicles were telling the truth, to a certain extent) would have relinquished the throne in favour of Vlad (for a potential compromise – apparently reached towards the end of 1476 – between Vlad and Basarab IV *Țepeș* however, and not *Laiotă*, see below, as well as MDE, II, no. 234, 339-340). Plus, in sharp contrast to the years 1475 and 1476, no known Transylvanian document on the events in Wallachia has survived from 1473 and 1474 (see the sources already published in Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, XV-1. *Acte și scrisori din arhivele orașelor ardelene Bistrița, Brașov, Sibiu, 1358-1600*, edited by N. Iorga (Bucharest, 1911) (*Hurmuzaki*), *ad annum*; *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*, VI. 1458-1473, edited by Gustav Gündisch, Herta Gündisch, Gernot Nussbächer, K.G. Gündisch (Bucharest, 1981), *ad annum*; VII. 1474-1486, edited by K.G. Gündisch (Bucharest, 1991), *ad annum*).

⁷¹ Conspicuously enough (not to mention other peculiarities), this aspect was not discussed in the most recent works on both Vlad III *the Impaller* and Basarab IV *Laiotă*, as well as in earlier, otherwise documented, monographs on Vlad III (e.g. Nicolae Stoicescu, *Vlad Țepeș* (Bucharest, 1976), pp. 142-152; Șt. Andreescu, *Vlad Țepeș (Dracula). Între legendă și adevărul istoric* (Bucharest, 1976¹; 1998², 2015³), 163-176; in the second, and in fact final, edition of the book).

⁷² We therefore redraw attention upon the mentioned absence of Transylvanian documents on these Wallachian events.

⁷³ With the notable exception of Decei’s cited study, Romanian historiography has paid little or no attention to this raid, possibly because it would have substantiated the Ottoman and Wallachian coordination between Stephen and Matthias.

⁷⁴ See Hurmuzaki, XV-1, no. 133, 77 (republished in *Urkundenbuch*, VI, no. 3882, 507); Pop-Simon, “*Ungaria et Valachia*”, pp. 23-24 (note 88; the reconciliation took place in May, when Matthias returned to Transylvania, to Cluj).

⁷⁵ On the Hungarian events of 1471, with focus on Nicholas Újlaki: Davor Salihović, An Interesting Episode: *Nicholas of Illok's Kingship in Bosnia, 1471-1477* [MA thesis (Central European University)] (Budapest, 2016), 53-54, 59-60.

⁷⁶ Given that the Principality of Theodoro was quite divided, that other remaining Christian powers were also eligible for alliances (e.g. the case of Muscovy), or that any political option had to factor-in the Tartars (nevertheless divided), the Genoese and in effect the Ottoman (seaborne) neighbours of Theodoro, one has to ask who “vouched” – on the Christian side at least (if not overall) – for Stephen’s Crimean marriage? The events (of 1471 and 1473) surrounding Mary’s and Stephen’s wedding indicate that Matthias’ support was the “collateral” (“deposit”) of Stephen in the Crimea, a peninsula by no means a stranger to the plans or to merely the overtures of John Hunyadi (in the 1440’s and chiefly in the 1450’s), Matthias Corvinus (since the 1460’s) or even *Draculia* (in 1462, but also in 1463) (for instance: Al. Simon, “The *Captain and the Superba*: Crusader Moments in the Relations between John Hunyadi and Genoa (October 1444–September 1455)”, in *Between Worlds (=Mélanges d'Histoire Générale*, NS, I, 1-2), II. *Extincta est lucerna orbis: John Hunyadi and his Time*, edited by Ana Dumitran, Loránd Mádl, Al. Simon (Cluj-Napoca, 2009), 333-364). It may well be, under the

from his first Hunyadi marriage of 1462),⁷⁷ had agreed to wed Justine Szilágyi, Matthias' maternal first degree cousin, still barren after her two previous matrimonies. By using a line from Plautus' thoughts on marriage, *rursus occupaverit*, at the end of the passage on the events in Wallachia and Stephen's deeds in favour of Vlad's cause,⁷⁸ Ragusa apparently alluded to Vlad's new Hunyadi matrimony in the report sent to Nicolò Marcello, on January 31, 1474,⁷⁹ but possibly also to the talks, first recorded on March 19, 1474, for the union between Matthias and Beatrice of Aragon.⁸⁰

It was rather self-evident that Matthias had his own designs for Wallachia, made utterly clear in the summer of 1473 (when Mehmed was fighting Usun in Asia Minor) through the pious deed of John Hunyadi's son for the Wallachian Monastery of Cozia,⁸¹ the necropolis of Mircea I *the Elder* (around 1475, Habsburg <-Venetian?> propaganda confused – quite voluntarily – Mircea I with his grandson, Vlad III, naming Mircea I *Dracula de Molda et Walachia*, who had withstood Bayezid I).⁸² Still, alike Stephen, Matthias did not make a military move against Mehmed II, while the sultan was away in Asia Minor, battling for survival (additionally, at that time, Matthias' envoys were in Mehmed's camp, where the troops sent by Radu and by Stephen were stationed).⁸³

The political calculus seemed rather simple and exceeded any formal sense of duty (either Christian anti-Ottoman and/ or dynastic, as the wives of Usun Hassan, Theodora Cantacuzenos/

circumstances of the early 1470s, that the latter attempted Crimean alliance (by Vlad III, attacked in 1462 also by Stephen, usually at odds with Genoese Caffa in the Crimea) played a more important part than one could presume, based on the scarce evidence at hand (several entries in Genoese registers on the envoys sent by Vlad to Caffa and to Matrega, in 1462, prior to Mehmed's campaign, and in 1463, were already edited, quite imperfectly nevertheless, by Nicolae Iorga in his *Acte și fragmente privitoare la istoria românilor*, III. [1399-1499] (Bucharest, 1899), 39-42).

⁷⁷ According primarily to the *Russian Story/ Stories* on Vlad from the 1480s-1490s (*Cronicle slavo-române*, 213).

⁷⁸ *Opuscula Plautina*, I, p. 63. This would have made Stephen's Wallachian campaign almost a wedding gift for Vlad.

⁷⁹ Simon, *Pământurile crucii*, 114, 123. Given only Vlad's "official" captivity of 12 years, the connection between his (second) Hunyadi marriage and the Neapolitan marriage of Matthias was already plausible. At present however, it seems that his matrimony predated Matthias' Neapolitan arrangement and possibly served as an argument in its favour.

⁸⁰ ASM, A.D.S., Potenze Estere, *Napoli*, cart. 225. 1473 november-1474 giugno, fasc. 5. *Marzo 1473*, nn (cf. Elisabetta Scarton, "Tra dualità et tradimenti: La politica (matrimoniale) di Ferrante d'Aragona nei primi anni Settanta del Quattrocento attraverso i dispacci sforzeschi da Napoli", *eHumanista*, XXXVIII (2018), 186-200, at 189). For such news to be sent from Naples to Milan on March 19, 1474, the potential deal must have been already considered in Buda, at least, in late January-early February, the latest. Ragusa's cited Venetian message signals an even earlier date.

⁸¹ DRH, B. *Țara Românească*, I. 1250-1500, edited by P.P. Panaitescu, Damaschin Mioc (Bucharest, 1966), no. 144, 241 (June 29, 1473). Unlike the charters of Sigismund of Luxemburg and John Hunyadi for the Monasteries of Vodița and Tismana, likewise in Oltenia (*Lesser Wallachia*), Matthias' deed was not – falsely – deemed a forgery in the 1940s (P.P. Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, edited by Gheorghe Lazăr (Bucharest, 2000), Appendix, pp. 400-401). In relation to the above-cited *Vlachia Maior* in Ragusa's Venetian report from January 31, 1474, we thus note that, during King Matthias' reign (and especially after, during the Habsburg-Jagellonian conflicts over Hungary), *Wallachia Minor* began to designate foremost Oltenia, not Moldavia as before (e.g. *Ausgewählte Regesten des Kaiserreiches unter Maximilian I, 1493-1519* (=Johannes).Friedrich] Böhmer, *Regesta Imperii*, XIV), general-editor Herman Wiesflecker, II. *Österreich, Reich und Europa*, I. 1493-1495, edited by Christa Beer, Manfred Hollegger, Kurt Riedl, H. Wiesflecker, Ingeborg Wiesflecker-Friedhuber (Vienna-Cologne-Weimar, 1989), no. 1481, 159 [March-April/ May 1495]). The *Vlachia Inferior* entries in Ragusa's registers are however perhaps more important, certainly for Ragusa's Wallachian perspective (DAD, *Acta Consiliorum* (A.C.), *Acta Consilii Rogatorum*, [reg.] 24. 1481-1485, ff. 65^v, 75^r, 124^v; March 26, April 20, 1482, January 4, 8, 1483). Nevertheless, these entries require supplementary research, in respect to both Kosača held Herzegovina and to Nicholas Ujlaki's rule as king of Bosnia (and of *Valachia*), between 1471 and 1477.

⁸² Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, *Abendländische Handschriften*, Cod. Lat. 14668, ff. 7^r-43^r (at ff. 23^r, 24^v; Mircea I had been the overlord of Moldavia as well; Stephen III had to concede in his "official chronicle" that Mircea I had enthroned Alexander I, Stephen's grandfather in 1400). Largely favourable to the Wallachians, as well as constantly hostile towards the Hunyadis, the work was dedicated to Maximilian, Emperor Frederick's son, deemed Christendom's hope. It was completed prior to Mehmed's Moldavian campaign of 1476. The short treatise, manifestly authored under the impact of the lamented *Turkish* conquest of Venetian Negroponte (1470), only recorded the successful anti-Ottoman resistance of Venetian Scutari and Moldavia in 1474-1475 (thus suggesting also a potential Habsburg-Venetian deal).

⁸³ See also the data in Cristea-Pienaru, "Țara Românească și bătălia de la Başkent", 20 (note 16), 32 (note 59), 35.

Despina Khatun, and Stephen III, Mary of Crimean Theodoro, were seemingly related).⁸⁴ If Usun, who had earlier simultaneously addressed Matthias and Stephen (with rather questionable results however),⁸⁵ won, then the way for Hungary (and for Moldavia) into Wallachia and the Balkans would have been free.⁸⁶ If Mehmed prevailed, his costs would have been too high for him to resist a Hungarian (and Moldavian) proposition.⁸⁷ The outcome of the clash between Mehmed II and Usun Hassan was however a triumph for the sultan and not the – expected – narrow military victory.⁸⁸ Mehmed's main remaining problems were of domestic nature, augmented, in addition to the dealings of Djem's entourage, as well as to the mysterious death of Mehmed's favourite son, Mustafa,⁸⁹ by one of the main charges brought against deposed grand-vesir Mahmud Angelović in spring 1474: Mahmud had freed *the Eflaki* (i.e. the Wallachians in Turkish sources).⁹⁰ After the

⁸⁴ According to Anthony M. Bryer ("Greeks and Türkmens: The Pontic Exception", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, XXIX (1975), 113-151, at 148-149, note 146) Theodora's role in establishing relations between Usun Hassan and Stephen III was instrumental. The hypothesis must be reviewed, given the largely unclear dynastic ties of Mary of Mangop (for the known and supposed connections: Gorovei-Székely, *Princeps omni laude maior*, pp. 88-89, note 269). Obviously however, any real or imagined connections between Theodora and Mary were not decisive policymaking factors. Stephen attacked Mehmed only after Usun's Ottoman defeat was confirmed. The same largely applies for any ties between Mary of Mangop and Zoe Palaeologus, Ivan III of Moscow's wife (cf. *Hustinskaja lietopiš*, in *Scriptores Rerum Polonicarum* (Krakow), II (1874), pp. 302-315, at p. 304, Mary was – quite literally – the second <degree> sister of Zoe). Certainly, Stephen alluded to no such relations between Mary and Zoe, when he wrote to Ivan after the Ottoman conquest of Crimea Caffa in the summer of 1475 (*Relațiile istorice dintre popoarele URSS și România în veacurile XV-începutul celui de al XVIII-lea*, I. 1408-1632, edited by J.S. Grosul, A.C. Oțetea, A.A. Novoselski, L.V. Cerepnin (Bucharest-Moscow, 1966), no. 9, pp. 61-62; cf. Șt. Andreescu, "Cronica lui Ștefan cel Mare: înțelesurile unei intreruperi", *Revista de Istorie și Teorie Literară*, XXXI (1983), 4, 67-72, at 69, note 11).

⁸⁵ For the main information: Petre Cancel, *Data epistolei lui Uzun-Hasan către Ștefan cel Mare și misiunea lui Isak-beg*, (Bucharest, 1912); Lajos Tárty, *Beyond the Ottoman Empire. 14th-16th Century Hungarian Diplomacy* (Szeged, 1978), 80, 96 (note 14); Idem, *Régi magyar követjárások Keleten* (Budapest, 1983²), pp. 35-54; Andreescu, "Uzun Hasan și Moldova", passim. Eventually, chiefly after the battle of Başkent (August 1473), Usun focused on Casimir IV of Poland. In February 1474, Usun's messenger even promised Casimir's support against Matthias in the Jagiellonian struggle for Bohemia and Hungary, if Casimir aided Usun against Mehmed (*Długosz*, IV, pp. 601-602; Dąbrowska, "Uzun Hassan's Project of Alliance", at 211-212). According to the same *Długosz* (IV, 621-623, 625-626), Usun re-approached Casimir after the battle of Vaslui. Then, Usun's envoy headed – once again – to Matthias.

⁸⁶ For the most recent Hungarian perspective on Matthias' actions in the early 1470s: Tamás Pálosfalvi, *From Nicopolis to Mohács: A History of Hungarian-Ottoman Warfare. 1389-1526* (Leiden-Boston, 2018), pp. 236-241. The southern gains of Stephen can be inferred from his Serbian claim (as *Stephano Servie sive Mundavie Vayvoda*), presented by Venice in Rome after the battle of Vaslui (for the document: Cristian Luca, Al. Simon, "Documentary Perspectives on Matthias Corvinus and Stephen the Great", *Transylvanian Review*, XVII (2008), 3, 85-112, here at 88).

⁸⁷ Furthermore, especially between summer/ autumn 1474 and spring 1476, Moldavian-Ottoman combats and talks were intertwined (e.g. Pop-Simon, "Ungaria et Valachia", 23, note 87). The same applies for the relations between Matthias and Mehmed, where the key issue seems to have been the control/ the partition of Bosnia (e.g. MDE, II, no. 219, 318-319). Last, but not least, Venice used in fact Stephen's victory at Vaslui to secure a six-month truce with Mehmed, a truce that largely enabled the sultan to take Crimean Caffa in that same summer (*Malipiero*, p. 112).

⁸⁸ Although there were still speculations in the following months and even years about the actual extent of Mehmed's Asian success, speculations often fuelled by Usun's various emissaries to the West, Usun ceased all attacks on the sultan after August 1473. In fact, during his confrontations with Matthias and Stephen of 1475-1476, Mehmed never was under threat from Asia Minor (Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, pp. 120-123). It was almost as if Usun "repaid" Matthias and Stephen for their conduct of 1473. A certain general unease seemingly surrounded the events of 1473.

⁸⁹ For these largely unclear Ottoman matters, see also M. Cazacu, "Les parentés byzantines et ottomanes de l'historien Laonikos Chalkokondylès (c. 1423-c. 1470)", *Turcica*, XVI (1984), 95-114, especially 99-100, 112-113.

⁹⁰ Theoharis Stavrides, *The Sultan of Vezirs: The Life and Times of Ottoman Grand Vezir Mahmud Pasha Angelović (1453-1474)* (Leiden-Boston-Cologne, 2001), 183, 342 (Stavrides however did not dwell much on these *Eflaki*).

end of Mehmed II's Asian campaign, Stephen III (and Matthias Corvinus) was (were) compelled to strike, before the Ottoman sultan managed to regain complete control over his internal affairs.⁹¹

The Return of Vlad. And so they did: they attacked.⁹² At the end of January 1474, Ragusa made it as clear as possible – under the circumstances – to Venice that weakened Usun Hassan would sooner or later come to terms with Mehme Ild and that much rather sooner than later the new anti-Ottoman front would be in Wallachia, with Stephen III (and Vlad III) in the first lines (and with King Matthias holding the reigns).⁹³ Fully aware of the difficulties of her strange relation with Matthias (whose Moldavian failure of 1467 the Republic of Saint Mark had in fact celebrated),⁹⁴ Venice overcame her quite justified Hungarian and Wallachian reluctances and secured an new arrangement with Matthias, while Stephen began to rise as Venice's representative in the East.⁹⁵ In spite of Matthias Corvinus' growing efforts to have Vlad III back on the Wallachian throne (in particular after Stephen III's victory at Vaslui at the beginning of 1475, as well as after the subsequent Crimean response of the Porte in June 1475),⁹⁶ the Wallachian restoration of Vlad III however proved significantly more difficult to accomplish than the Venetian-Hungarian-Moldavian anti-Ottoman coordination.⁹⁷

An (if not the) explanation may be harboured in Ragusa.⁹⁸ In autumn 1476, when Vlad was finally restored to (some) Wallachian power, before losing his life under unclear circumstances,⁹⁹

⁹¹ The nature of Ottoman dynastic and domestic concerns in the first decades after the fall of Byzantium requires further studies, given, in our case, foremost the rather strange and largely unknown Christian ties of Mehmed II and even of Ali Mihaloğlu (with focus on Ali, see also Simon, *Pământurile crucii*, 125, 272-275; Cazacu, *Dracula*, 189-190).

⁹² A balanced approach of the subsequent events: Șt. Andreescu, "L'action de Vlad Țepeș dans le sud-est de l'Europe en 1476", *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes*, XV (1977), 2, 259-272.

⁹³ It thus even more difficult therefore to assert the reasons behind the scholarly neglect of Ragusa's Venetian letter from January 31, 1474. In Romanian historiography, the reasons appear to have been twofold: (1) the letter strengthened the ties between Matthias and Stephen and (2) contradicted the official (Romanian) narratives on the events in Wallachia.

⁹⁴ According to Gerardo de Colli, the Milanese ambassador in Venice (March 26, 1468): [...] *qui [in Venice] certeza ch'el Re de Ungaria, per mezo de la excelsa comunita di Firenze [Ottoman friendly, under Cosimo and then Lorenzo di Medici] fuse acordato con la liga de Italia, et rivoltarsi contro lo stato de la Signoria, et per questo dichano che la rotta ha havuto in Transilvania he stata judicium Dey et la salute de Stato de essa Signoria [...]* (MDE, II, no. 46, 76).

⁹⁵ I.-A. Pop, "La Santa Sede, Venezia e la Valacchia nella crociata antiottomana di fine Quattrocento", *Transylvanian Review*, XX (2011), suppl. 1 [2012], 7-22, at 16-18; Pop-Simon, "Românii și regele Ștefan", 26-27.

⁹⁶ E.g. Al. Simon, "The Western Impact of Eastern Events: The Crusader Consequences of the Fall of Caffā", *Istros*, XVIII (2011), 383-396, at 393-395; A. Weber, A. Gheorghe, "Noi descoperiri în arhivele Italiei și Austriei cu privire la ultimul an din viața lui Vlad Țepeș (1476)", *Muzeul Național*, XXXI (2019), 27-46, at 33-35, 40-43.

⁹⁷ E.g. MDE, II, no. 234, 339-340 (February 1, 1477). Though he styled himself voivode of Wallachia, Vlad III was apparently (he was certainly perceived as such) only King Matthias' captain in Wallachia ("viceroy" at best).

⁹⁸ Romanian studies on relations between Ragusa and the Wallachians north of the Danube prior to Mohács are few in number, outdated and based on minimal archival researches (e.g. N. Iorga, "Raguse et les Roumains", *Bulletin de l'Institut pour l'Étude de l'Europe Sud-Orientale*, X (1923), 34-43; Ilie Bărbulescu, "Relations entre les Principautés Roumaines, Raguse et les Ragusains dans la période du slavonisme cultural", in *Zbornik iz dubrovačke prošlosti: Milanu Rešetaru o 70-oj godišnjici života prijatelji i učenici*, edited by Vladimir Ćorović (Dubrovnik, 1931), 113-127; Al. Grecu [P.P. Panaitescu], "Relațiile Țării Românești și ale Moldovei cu Ragusa (secolele XV-XVIII)", *Studii. Revista de Istorie*, II (1949), 4, 105-124, Dinu C. Giurescu, "Relațiile economice ale Țării Românești cu țările Peninsulei Balcanice din secolul al XIV-lea până la mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea", *Romanoslavica*, XI (1965), 167-201.

⁹⁹ Al. Simon, "De Dragule crudelitate: ultima domnie a lui Vlad al III-lea Țepeș pe pământurile Valahiei Mari", *Revista Istorică*, NS, XXIX (2018), 5-6 [2020], 517-540. In support of the significantly more complex power relations in Wallachia proper, we emphasize two passages in two otherwise known sources: (1) in the letter on Matthias' Serbian campaign sent by Gabriel Rangoni, bishop of Eger and former bishop of Transylvania, to Pope Sixtus IV, on March 7, 1476: [...] *Tandem cum aque excreverint quemadmodum prius conceperat in Regnum Transalpinum [the Hungarian official Latin name for Wallachia proper] cum Moldavis et ipsius Vualachie Maioris exercitu convenire intendit [...]* (*Codex diplomaticus Partium Regno Hungariae adnexarum* (=Monumenta Hungariae Historica, I, 31, 33, 36, 40), II. Magyarország és Szerbia közti összeköttetések oklevéltára. 1198-1526, edited by L. Thallóczy, Antal Áldásy, (Budapest,

Mehmed returned north of the Lower Danube after his Wallachian summer campaign, like in 1462 (when Vlad committed his alleged act of treason against Matthias).¹⁰⁰ According to the Ragusan envoys sent to him, they were unable to encounter the sultan, because he had left for *Moldovia*.¹⁰¹ Even though the enthronement of *Vladislaus Dracula*,¹⁰² at precisely the same time, would have therefore been a victory over the sultan himself, neither Matthias, nor Stephen (both in dire need of anti-Ottoman success, after their trap, set for Mehmed, had failed in July 1476), said a word about Mehmed's return.¹⁰³ And then, they were seemingly satisfied with lamenting the death of Vlad.¹⁰⁴

1907), no. 369, p. 267); (2) in Stephen's letter to the Transylvanian Saxon city Braşov, from which he requested, on January 4, 1477, news on the fate of his brother Lad [Vlad]: [...] *de facto Magnifici Ladi fratre nostro in Magna Walahya contingit* [...] (Hurmuzaki, XV-1, no. 169, 76; republished, still under January 5, in *Urkundenbuch*, VII, no. 4163, 124). The two distinct(ive) mentions of *Great Wallachia* further single out the *Vlachia Maior* (of Radu, Vlad and Stephen) in the message sent by the Ragusa to doge Marcello more than two, three years earlier.

¹⁰⁰ *Stare srpske povelje i pisma*, I-2. *Dubrovnik i susedi negovi*, edited by Ljubomir Stojanović (Belgrade, 1934), no. 845, 263 ([...] *Written on November 15, at the Wallachians*; i.e. on November 15 <1462>). Translated into French by Bojko Bojović, *Raguse (Dubrovnik) et l'Empire Ottoman (1430-1520). Les actes impériaux ottomans en vieux serbe de Murad II à Selim I^{er}* (Paris, 1998), no. 29, 231-232. Cf. already Al. Simon, "Propaganda and Matrimony: Dracula between the Hunyadis and the Habsburgs", *Transylvanian Review*, XX (2011), 4, 80-90, here at 82-83, 88.

¹⁰¹ DAD, A.C., *Acta Consilii Rogatorum*, reg. 23. 1476-1478, f. 61^v (entry from November 16). Pasqual(e) Gondola (Gundulić) had not met with Sultan Mehmed II, [...] *quod imperator non erat in Romania, sed in Moldovia* [...]. At that time, when Beatrice of Aragon had left, on September 15, for her wedding with Matthias (she arrived in Buda on December 22), Stephen III's family was probably still in Venice. His family certainly was in the Laguna on August 1, when the Republic covered her expenses for the past month (Pop-Simon, „*Ungaria et Valachia*”, 50).

¹⁰² The Ragusan use of Vladislaus (Vladislav), instead of the Hungarian Ladislas, for Vlad III, suggest that the much rumoured, at least since the 1480s, conversion of Vlad to Catholicism, while in Matthias' Hungarian custody, did not occur after 1473 (see the German and Russian stories in Cazacu, *Dracula*, Appendix, 362, 369). If such a conversion, contrary furthermore to the provisions of the Florentine Union (it was forbidden to change rites), ever took place, the conversion was enacted at a much earlier date (see also the Papal stand on the matter of post-Florentine conversions in Odorico Rinaldi, *Annales ecclesiastici ab anno MCXCVIII ubi desinit Cardinalis Baronibus auctore Odorico Raynaldo accedunt*, XVIII (Rome, 1693), *Ad annum 1448*, no. 10, p. 359; Stephen III also opposed the changing of rites; I. Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ştefan cel Mare*, II (Bucharest, 1913), no. 176, 411; no. 180, 451).

¹⁰³ Al. Simon, "Mehmed II's Return to *Moldovia* in 1476 and the Death of the *King of Dacia*", *Transylvanian Review*, XXIX (2020), suppl. 1, pp. 53-64. The way(s) in which, around 1480-1481, Martino Segono, *Latin* rite Bishop of Novo Brdo, depicted the events in Wallachia (1473-1476) is much worth a closer look (Agostino Pertusi, *Martino Segono di Novo Brdo, vescovo di Dulcigno. Un umanista serbo dalmata del tardo Quattrocento. Vita e opere*, edited by Chiara Faraggiana (Rome, 1981), Appendix: *Opusculum reverendi Domini Martini de Segonis natione Catharensis origine autem Serviani ex Novomontio aliter Novobardo dicto Dei gratia episcopi Olchinensis ad Beatissimum Sixtum IV Romanum Pontificem. Tractatus de provisione Hydronti et de ordine militum Turci et eius origine*, 78-146, at 137).

¹⁰⁴ E.g. Stephen's often quoted Venetian message from May 1477 (*Documentele lui Ştefan cel Mare*, II, no. 154, 342-351) or Matthias' words in the charters for Stephen Báthory (June 1477 and March 1479), Vlad's royal Hungarian associate during the anti-Ottoman combats in Moldavia and Wallachia in 1476, as well as voivode of Transylvania, after March 1479 (*Documenta ad historiam familiae Bători de Ecsed spectantia*, I. 1393-1540, edited by Richárd Horváth, Tibor Neumann, Norbert C. Tóth (Nyíregyháza, 2011), nos. 108-109, 138-140).